

Equality and Diversity Policy

Introduction

As part of the commitment made by One NorthEast (the Agency) to Equality of Opportunity it has adopted a Policy statement covering its employment practices and procedures.

This document outlines the policy that must be strictly adhered to by every employee. All breaches of this policy will be investigated and, where appropriate, disciplinary procedures followed.

Equal Opportunities

Relates to treating people the same, although they may belong to certain groups. Equal Opportunities in particular relates to a Legal Framework, which makes it illegal to discriminate against people because they belong to particular groups.

Diversity

Diversity is a broader concept that builds upon the progress made through equal opportunities. Everyone is different and diversity is about recognising, respecting and valuing the differences we each bring to work.

Equal opportunities and diversity work together by addressing the inequalities and barriers faced by people in under-represented groups and by valuing, learning and benefiting from the diverse cultures in society and our staff.

General Statement of Policy

It is the Agency's policy that no employee or prospective employee will receive less favourable treatment or is disadvantaged by any circumstances, conditions or requirements that cannot be justified.

The Policy Statement

The Management of One NorthEast recognises that people are discriminated against and will make every effort to ensure they will not unreasonably exclude any individual from access to any activities, goods, facilities or services, or any employment opportunities, that they offer.

As an employer committed to equality and diversity in all its practices the Agency recognises that groups and individuals are discriminated against on the basis of age, gender, ethnic origin, race, nationality, colour of skin, sexuality, impairment (physical, sensory or learning), physical appearance, marital or other life status, religious or political belief and other differences that cannot be justified.

Every employee is entitled to expect equality of opportunity in all aspects of their employment including its terms and conditions.

Every potential employee is entitled to expect the recruitment process to be free of all unreasonable barriers

All employees of the Agency shall be made aware of this policy and its implications for them.

What we Expect from our Employees

Whilst the responsibility for creating and monitoring a culture of equality of opportunity rests with the Agency, its success relies on each employee playing their part.

Employees have a number of responsibilities; many of which are directly related to their jobs, but the following are general instructions that apply to everyone:

- a) every employee shall comply with measures that are introduced to ensure equality of opportunity and non-discrimination. Training appropriate to each employee's role will be provided.
- b) those individuals responsible for other employees are not to discriminate when applying processes relating to the training, advancement, performance management, transfer, redeployment, discipline, retirement, dismissal or redundancy, benefits, facilities and services
- c) no employee shall induce, or attempt to induce other employees or trade unions or management to discriminate

- d) no employee shall victimise an individual on the grounds that they have made complaints or provided information about discrimination or harassment.
- e) no employee shall harass, abuse or intimidate another employee on any grounds.

Publicising and Advertising Vacancies

All vacancies shall first be advertised internally in the first instance; if no internal candidate is appointed then the post shall be advertised externally.

All recruitment material and processes, including advertisements will be available, or be offered, in a variety of media that reflects the basic requirements of the post. Use shall be made of local media, job centres and careers offices.

Potential applicants shall be given clear and accurate information about posts through a job description and person specification that includes only requirements that are necessary and justifiable for the effective performance for the job.

Advertisements in printed media shall adhere to clear print guidelines.

All recruitment advertisements shall draw attention to the Agency's Equal Employment Opportunity Policy, its status as a disability Symbol user, and that any applicant for a post who wishes to declare that they have a disability and who satisfies the job description and person specification will be offered an interview.

Recruitment

Recruitment practice and procedures shall be as open and as barrier free as possible

Application forms and other supporting material shall be free of personal questions or requests for information from which inferences could be drawn as to the status of an individual that are irrelevant to the job description.

Selection criteria shall be kept under review to ensure that they are justifiable for the effective execution of the job.

More than one person shall be involved in shortlisting and selection for interview, and all involved shall have received training in equality and diversity.

Assessment Centres shall be conducted on an objective basis and shall deal only with the applicant's suitability for the job and ability to meet the job requirements.

Questions and selection tests shall relate to the requirements of the job and shall be carried out by staff trained in carrying out the tests and the assessment of results.

No applicant shall be disadvantaged by an interview's timing, location or facilities.

Reasons for selection or rejection of applicants shall be recorded.

All applications shall be subject to confidential monitoring system using only the approved form.

Any applicant for a post who wishes to declare that they have a disability and who satisfies the job description and person specification will be offered an interview. A statement to this effect shall appear in recruitment material and any advertisement.

Training

The Agency's policy of equality extends to training; this covers its general training programme and training in disability awareness and equality and diversity training.

Each employee has the right to expect not to be unreasonably discriminated against, either directly or indirectly, in the opportunities to be trained, in how it is provided, where it is provided and through what medium

All new employees shall receive induction training within one month of starting work to give them a good understanding of the organisation and its policies and practices

Regular and appropriate training will be provided to all staff to enable them to perform their jobs effectively and to ensure that they have the best opportunities for advancement.

Where relocation or redeployment is being considered, re-training will be discussed with the individual concerned and if found to be necessary and appropriate will be agreed in advance of any decision being taken.

All staff involved in selection or interviewing shall be trained to ensure that appointments are made on an objective basis.

Personnel involved in management, selection and dealing with the public shall be trained and receive guidance in the law, best practice and organisational policy, their own personal responsibilities and corporate liability under the law and the nature and effect of both reasonable and unreasonable discrimination.

Terms and Conditions of Employment

The Agency complies with the Equal Pay Acts and is committed to ensuring that they do not unreasonably discriminate against any individual in the terms and conditions, both contractual and implied, within which they offer and provide employment.

Staff facilities and services shall be equally available to all employees and where, for reasons of space and cost, this is not being achieved, reasonable alterations will be made.

Contracts and Terms and Conditions of employment shall be made available in a variety of media and positive consideration will always be given to requests for them in other formats.

Monitoring

The Diversity & Equality Specialist Advisor is responsible for monitoring the effective implementation of the Equality & Diversity Policy with overall responsibility for its implementation and supervision remaining with the Agency.

All aspects of Personnel policies and procedures shall be kept under review and as part of this, and in order to identify the effectiveness of Policy implementation, an anonymous and confidential record maintained giving a profile of the Agency's staff make up. A voluntary monitoring form shall be issued with every application form with a separate and identifiable envelope for its return with the application. The Human Resources Team shall ensure that they remain un-opened

until a successful appointment has been made. The information will then be logged for monitoring purposes.

The employee audit will be carried out annually, normally in May to establish the composition of the work force.

Employees are entitled to access, check, correct and up-date their own record of these details. Otherwise access to this information shall be restricted and controlled by the Human Resources Team.